

THE  
COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

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No. 3.

READING IN SCHOOL.

NOTWITHSTANDING all we have said on the subject of reading in school, we must be permitted to recur to it again ; nor can we forbear remarking upon it, until the nuisance of unintelligent reading is abated. It is time, that it was practically understood, that there can be articulate noises, without reading. Reading implies an act of the mind, as well as of the bodily organs,—thought and feeling, as well as speech. Nor is it enough to understand a few of the words read. All of them should be understood. Every word, not understood, is a broken link in the chain of thought. It is not enough that the teacher realizes the advantage and the necessity of mastering the whole lesson ;—a conviction of this advantage and necessity should be made as clear and as strong in the mind of the pupil, as in that of the instructor. The first step, which a teacher should take, in order to rectify an error in his pupils, is to make them see it. Pupils will not strive to remedy a defect, which they do not perceive.

Every teacher can make the evil of unintelligent reading apparent to his pupils, in the following manner. Take the subjoined extract, for instance, from Washington Irving's 'Character of Columbus,' found in some of our school books.

"A peculiar trait, in his rich and varied character, remains to be noticed ; that ardent and enthusiastic imagination, which threw a magnificence over his whole style of thinking. Herrera intimates, that he had a talent for poetry, and some slight traces of it are on record, in the book of prophecies, which he presented to the Catholic sovereigns. But his poetical temperament is discernible throughout all his writings, and in all his actions. It spread a golden and glorious world around him, and tinged every thing with its own gorgeous colors. It betrayed him into visionary speculations, which subjected him to the sneers and cavillings of men of cooler and safer, but more grovelling, minds. Such were the conjectures formed on the coast of Paria, about the form of the earth, and the situation of the terrestrial paradise ; about the mines of Ophir, in Hispaniola, and of the Aurea Chersonesus, in Veragua ; and such was the heroic scheme of the crusade, for the recovery of the holy sepulchre. It mingled with his religion, and filled his mind with solemn and visionary meditations, on mystic passages of the Scriptures, and the shadowy portents of the prophecies. It exalted his office in his eyes, and made him conceive himself an agent, sent forth upon a sublime and awful mission, subject to impulses and supernatural visions from the Deity.

"He was decidedly a visionary, but a visionary of an uncommon and successful kind. The manner in which his ardent imagination and mercurial nature were controlled by a powerful judgment, and directed by an acute sagacity, is the most extraordinary feature in his character."

Now, though the scholars' eyes see all the words contained in this extract ; yet the true question is, do their minds see all the ideas ? Probably the following mutilated form of the extract, gives a visible representation of as much of the author's meaning as most school children perceive.

"A in his rich character, to be noticed ;  
 that and which threw  
 his whole thinking. Herrera he had  
 poetry, and some are on record, in the book  
 which he presented But his  
 spread throughout all his writings, and in all his actions. It  
 world around him, and every thing  
 It betrayed him  
 which subjected him men of  
 more minds. Such were the the  
 coast about the form of the earth, and the situation  
 about the mines  
 and such was the heroic  
 recovery It mingled with his religion, and  
 filled his mind with passages  
 of the Scriptures,  
 his office in his eyes, made him conceive himself an agent, sent forth  
 upon subject

"He was decidedly of an uncommon and  
 successful kind. The manner in which his  
 nature were controlled by a powerful judgment, and directed by  
 is the most feature in his character."

Of how many reading lessons does the above present a picture. Every  
 pupil, on reading the above, can be made to see what nonsense he is utter-  
 ing ;—a fact, which in the common way of reading, does not occur to him.  
 Often, it is worse than the mere non-perception of so many important ideas,  
 for some pupils do not leave blanks, but fill up the blank spaces with erro-  
 neous notions.

Again, every scholar can understand, what a misfortune it would be, if  
 he had,—what we may call an intermittent vision,—an eye, which could  
 see three or four words, and then could not, by any possibility, see as many  
 more of the succeeding ones ;—he can be made to understand, that he is,  
 in every respect, just as unfortunate, if he can learn the meaning of but  
 three or four successive words, and is then seized with an inability to com-  
 prehend the three or four which follow. This oft-recurring blindness of  
 the mind is as great a misfortune, as a similar blindness of the eyes would  
 be. In the same manner, the folly and mischief of unintelligent reading  
 may be illustrated by reference to the ear ;—by a supposed suspension of  
 the power of hearing, in regard to alternate words, or clauses. Should a  
 scholar read in a book, suitable to his age and opportunities, without un-  
 derstanding any of the words he reads, none would hesitate to pronounce  
 him a fool ;—how near a scholar comes under the same denomination, who  
 understands but one half or one fourth of his words, we leave to be stated  
 in fractions, according to each case.

It is essential, that the scholar, as well as the teacher, should perceive  
 the utility of intelligent reading ; for such is the constitution of human na-  
 ture, that any exercise or duty will be performed better when the reason  
 for it is understood, than if it were done from blind obedience only.

While on the subject of reading, we would mention, with disapproval, the  
 common practice, which prevails in some schools, of arresting a scholar in  
 the midst of a sentence,—as at a semicolon,—and calling on the next to  
 finish it. Generally speaking, an entire sentence should be read by each  
 scholar, in order that he may bring out the full idea, intended to be ex-  
 pressed in it, by the author.

In reading, too, the attention of the pupils to the lesson will be better se-  
 cured, if they are called upon promiscuously,—that is, first, the fifth, in the  
 order of their arrangement, then the tenth, the third, &c., &c. Each pupil,  
 not knowing but he shall be called the next, will be obliged to keep his eye

and mind on the lesson. The teacher, with a little care, will be able to give each one an average number of turns, in the course of the day, as well as though the class should read in a consecutive order. While reading in this way, he may occasionally, for variety's sake, stop a pupil in the midst of a sentence, and require another to catch it up instantaneously, and to complete it in a proper tone of voice.

This course tends to ensure better attention ; and the great defect, in our schools, is the want of attention. The prudential committee may think he has rendered the district a service, by employing a cheap teacher, and thus prolonging the school ; but if half the time of the pupils is lost by reason of a vagrant mind, then a term of six months is reduced to one of three months, and bad habits are acquired, which will cause the loss of years. The law requires a Register to be kept in the schools, which shows the number of absent *bodies*. Could a Register be kept, showing the number of absent *minds*, what solitary places would some school-rooms be found to be. If care be not taken, perhaps the attention of scholars is more likely to wander from the reading lesson, than from any other. Arithmetic cannot be recited, if the mind is absent, or even wavers in its application, in any stage of the process. Immediate error is the consequence of thoughtlessness, and therefore betrays it. The same remark holds true, to a great extent, in grammar and in geography. But after a pupil has acquired a facility in recognising and uttering words ;—especially if the lesson have been frequently read, and is therefore familiar, it is easy to exercise the faculty of language alone, while all the rest of the mental powers are dormant. Birds have been taught to imitate the human voice. Wooden machines have been constructed, which would execute a great variety of articulate sounds. So far as a scholar does not understand his lesson, what is he better than a mocking bird, or a wooden machine ?

[For the Common School Journal.]

#### ON THE MOTIVES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

NO. V.

DEAR SIR,—How is the love of the truth to be made to have any influence in governing a school, and in exciting the mind to action ?

Let us first foster and establish the love of truth, and then see how it will serve our purpose. But let me not be thought to have so low an idea of the value of a love of truth, that I would have it cultivated, for the sake of its use. The implanting of it in the mind is, in itself, one of the best and highest of objects. If we attain this only, we make a very high attainment. It will cooperate for all good ends. The child or the man, who has a deep and fixed love of truth, cannot be engaged in any thing bad or mean.

A love of truth must emanate from the teacher. It is in vain that he shall attempt to impress it upon his pupils, if he have it not burning in his own breast. And he will teach it more effectively, just in proportion as he has it more deeply and sincerely. Let him feel an entire reverence for the truth, and let him show this in his words and acts.

Many practices common in school have a tendency to destroy, or at least to weaken, the love of truth. A teacher should never distrust a pupil without cause. In doing so, he does what he can, to teach him falsehood. A child is never so much tempted to lie, as when he finds he is already considered a liar.

I need hardly say, he should never tempt his pupils to lie. An obvious feeling and understanding of the command, *swear not at all*, is—never make a promise. I believe it was given by Him who knew what weakness is in man, to guard this sacred love of truth. A teacher should not require nor

allow his pupil to promise not to repeat an act. If he do, he tempts him to break his promise. He tempts him to do a thing infinitely worse than the trifling offences which he would guard against. He ought to be satisfied, with pointing out the evil, and exacting the penalty. But let him never require the promise.

Much harm is done, by attempting to induce children to tell of each other. Most children in school have a natural sense of honor, in regard to this, which, so far from being violated, should be cherished and respected. It may be a mistaken sense of honor; it usually is; but it is a noble feeling, and may be enlightened into a high principle. The detection of the author of little freaks of childish folly, or even of childish mischief, is, and should be considered, of infinitely less consequence, than the preservation of this sense of honor. There is no great harm, in the culprit's escaping. There is very great, in children's learning to regard each other and themselves as informers.

If a teacher will look a little into his own motives, he will find, that the anxious desire to bring to light and punishment a culprit, who has been guilty of some practical joke, or violation of school law, has more of selfishness and pride in it, than of love of justice, or of the good of the offender. Let him have magnanimity enough to look upon his own laws as of little consequence, in comparison with the *real* good of his pupils, and he will be less galled at seeing them broken; and, if he persevere long enough, he will awaken a magnanimity in the pupil, which will be a surer protection of his laws, than any selfish precaution. When the pupil sees that the master's anxiety for the execution of the laws comes from a consideration that they are *his* laws, he loses respect for the law and for the law-maker. But convince him that you have a higher regard for him than you have for your temporary laws, and you soon enlist the feelings of his better nature in favor of yourself and your regulations.

In a school, at least, if not in society, how much might be gained, on the score of justice and truth, by constant reference to that code, according to which, the most effectual punishment, for one frail creature to inflict upon another, equally frail, is—*forgiveness*.

Another temptation to falsehood, to be avoided, always, if possible, is the setting one child to be monitor or spy over others. I know that in some schools, and according to some systems, this is unavoidable. But I know, also, that it is liable to produce falsehood, injustice, and ill feeling. A child must be more than a child; he must have, in abundant measure, all the best qualifications of a mature teacher, to be able to perform justly, truly, and kindly, the duties of a monitor. Such there sometimes are, and such may be employed. But none others should.

I have adverted, briefly, and, as you may perhaps think, somewhat magisterially, to the common occasions of a departure from truth. I have done it, however, from a conviction that the love and the habit of truth-telling is of infinitely more importance, than any acquisition, connected with studies, which can ever be made in school, and for the sake of which, the love of the truth is put at hazard.

The desire of attaining to the truth, in matters of science or history, will be found to be a natural consequence of the love of moral truth, of which I have been speaking. This is a strong inducement to thoroughness in investigation; but I admit that it comes into operation later, and supposes a higher degree of advancement, than any other of the motives of which I have had occasion to speak.

Its cultivation, however, is of such consequence, that it ought to receive far more attention than is usually given it. A teacher has many opportunities of inculcating it. The extravagant language that young persons are very prone to use, though possibly proceeding only from exuberant feelings, should be guarded and repressed. Over-statements naturally lead to



falsehood. Good taste, as well as truth, is concerned in the restriction ; exaggeration is a violation of both.

Exactness in statements, and in the performance of all school exercises, is chiefly important in its moral relations, as leading to scrupulous adherence to truth.

I perceive, dear sir, that in all that I have said, I have considered the love of truth, as a great end rather than a means ; and so should it be. This is its right place ; but whatever is done towards this end, will, at the same time, lead to all the good ends we can have in view. Yours,

G. B. E

[From the Boston Almanac.]

### ACCOUNT OF THE SCHOOLS IN BOSTON.

PREPARED FOR THE BOSTON ALMANAC, BY JOSEPH W. INGRAHAM.

The following tabular view of the Statistics of the Schools, for the last year, may be interesting to those who take an interest in such matters. The number of admissions and discharges, includes the transfers from one school to another.

Established.	Name.	During the year.						Number belong- ing, November 1, 1839.			Average at- tendance during the year.		
		Admitted.			Discharged.			Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
		Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.						
1 1635	Latin,	40	—	40	39	—	39	134	—	134	115	—	115
2 1713	Eliot,	236	—	236	277	—	277	391	—	391	363	—	363
3 1717	Adams,	181	119	300	161	110	271	248	178	426	201	131	332
4 1785	Franklin,	110	108	218	115	99	214	267	190	457	220	128	348
5 1803	Mayhew,	249	—	249	267	—	267	412	—	412	347	—	347
6 1811	Hawes,	132	159	291	89	98	187	264	269	533	196	182	378
7 1812	Smith,	87	78	165	44	54	98	60	60	120	76	76	152
8 1819	Boylston,	98	192	290	122	166	288	215	257	472	221	236	457
9 1821	Bowdoin,	—	223	223	—	233	233	—	482	482	—	400	400
10 1821	Eng. High,	63	—	63	63	—	63	114	—	114	109	—	109
11 1822	Hancock,	—	333	333	—	482	482	—	437	437	—	429	429
12 1833	Wells,	146	142	288	133	157	290	224	226	450	190	196	386
13 1836	Johnson,	—	329	329	—	247	247	—	472	472	—	320	320
14 1836	Winthrop,	245	—	245	190	—	190	220	—	220	186	—	186
15 1837	Lyman,	31	31	62	18	25	43	62	53	115	56	42	98
16 1839	Endicott,	157	224	381	57	62	119	100	162	262	87	105	192
Total in these 16 Schools,		1775	1938	3713	1575	1733	3308	2711	2786	5497	2367	2245	4612
In 91 Primary do.		2262	2170	4432	1861	1779	3640	2790	2612	5402	2322	2228	4550
In public do. . . . .		4037	4108	8145	3436	3512	6948	5501	5398	10899	4689	4473	9162
In one hundred and thirteen private schools, . . . . .								1287	2082	3369			
Number of pupils receiving instruction in the city, * . .								6788	7480	14268			

1. *School Street.* Epes S. Dixwell, *Master.* Francis Gardner, *Submaster.* Edward E. Hale, and William E. Townsend, *Ushers.* Jonathan Snelting, *Instructor in Writing.*

2. *North Bennet Street.* Named in honor of Rev. Andrew Eliot, D. D. David B. Tower, *English Grammar Master.* Levi Conant, *Writing Master.* George Tower, and Jacob H. Kent, *Ushers.*

3. *Mason Street.* Named in honor of the patriot, Samuel Adams. Samuel Barrett, *English Grammar Master.* Josiah Fairbank, *Writing Master.* ———, *Usher.*

4. *Washington Street.* Named in honor of Dr. Franklin. Barnum Field,

\* Whole number of persons in the city, between four and sixteen years of age, 17,480. —Ed.

*English Grammar Master.* Nathan Merrill, *Writing Master.* Joseph T. Swan, *Usher.*

5. *Hawkins Street.* Named in honor of Rev. Jonathan Mayhew, D. D. William D. Swan, *English Grammar Master.* Aaron D. Capen, *Writing Master.* Benjamin Drew, jr., and William K. Vaill, *Ushers.*

6. *At South Boston.* Named in honor of Mr. John Hawes. Frederick Crafts, *English Grammar Master.* John A. Harris, *Writing Master.* Jonathan Battles, jr., *Usher.*

7. *Belknap Street.* This is the School for Colored Children, and is named in honor of Abiel Smith, Esq., who left a fund for supplying these pupils with books, &c. Abner Forbes, *Master.*

8. *Washington Place, Fort Hill.* Named in honor of Thomas Boylston, Esq. Charles Fox, *English Grammar Master.* Aaron B. Hoyt, *Writing Master.*

9. *Derne Street.* Named in honor of Gov. James Bowdoin. Abraham A. Andrews, *English Grammar Master.* James Robinson, *Writing Master.*

10. *Pinckney Street.* Thomas Sherwin, *Master.* Luther Robinson, *Sub-master.* Francis S. Williams, *Usher.* Francis M. J. Surault, *Teacher of French.* William F. Stratton, *Instructor in Writing.*

11. *Hanover Street.* Named in honor of Gov. John Hancock. William J. Adams, *English Grammar Master.* Peter Mackintosh, jr., *Writing Master.*

12. *McLean Street.* Named in honor of the Hon. Charles Wells. Cornelius Walker, *English Grammar Master.* Reuben Swan, jr., *Writing Master.* William H. Swan, *Usher.*

13. *Tremont Street.* Named in honor of Lady Arbella Johnson. Richard G. Parker, *Master.* Andrew J. Loud, *Usher.*

14. *East Street.* Named in honor of Gov. John Winthrop. Henry Williams, jr., *Master.* Daniel French, *Usher.*

15. *At East Boston.* Named in honor of the Hon. Theodore Lyman, jr. Albert Bowker, *Master.*

16. *Cooper Street.* Named in honor of Gov. John Endicott. George Allen, *English Grammar Master.* Loring Lothrop, *Writing Master.*

These Schools are the pride and glory of Boston, and date their origin almost as far back as the first settlement of the town. So early as April 15, 1635, we find, among other proceedings of a public meeting, that "Likewise it was then generally agreed upon, that our Brother Philemon Purmont shall be intreated to become Scholemaster for the Teaching and Nourtering of Children with us." The interest in education, exhibited at this early period, has been continued to the present day.

The whole number of Schools, supported at the expense of the city, is one hundred and seven. Of these, ninety-one are Primary Schools, fourteen are English Grammar and Writing Schools, one an English High School, and one a Latin School.

The Primary Schools are for children of both sexes, between four and seven years of age, and are under the care of a Committee, consisting of ninety-three gentlemen, each of whom (excepting two) has the particular supervision of one School. The Schools are arranged in ten Districts, besides two at East Boston, and one on the Western Avenue. The Schools in each District are under the special care of the Committee of that District. They were established in the year 1818, by a vote of the Town, which appropriated five thousand dollars, for the expenses of the first year. Since that time, the number has increased to ninety-one, and the annual expenses are about twenty-eight thousand dollars, exclusive of the cost of School-houses, of which the greater number are owned by the city, having been erected specially for these Schools, at an average cost of about three thousand dollars for each building, accommodating two Schools.

The Primary Schools are visited and examined, once a month, by their

Committees, and semi-annually, by the Standing Committee of the whole Board. At the semi-annual examination, in November, 1839, there were present four thousand four hundred and eighty-three pupils, and absent, nine hundred and nineteen, making the whole number, belonging, five thousand four hundred and two, averaging fifty-nine and one third to each School. During the preceding six months, they had been examined by the Committee three hundred and seventy-five times, and visited five hundred and twenty-eight times; being an average of more than four examinations, and about six visits, to each School, for the six months.

The Primary Schools are taught by females, who receive an annual salary of two hundred and fifty dollars. They maintain a very high rank, and children are taught in them to read fluently, and spell correctly, and have imparted to them, a knowledge of the elementary principles of arithmetic, and other things, with which children of their age ought to be made acquainted.

It having been found that there were many children in the city, too old for the Primary Schools, and not qualified for the English Grammar Schools, the City Council, in 1838, authorized the Primary School Committee to receive such children into one School in each District, and by the semi-annual report of the examination, in November, 1839, it appears, that there were then, in the Schools, one thousand and ninety-one children over seven years of age, many of whom were of this latter description.

At seven years of age, if able to read fluently, and spell correctly, the pupils receive from the Primary School Committee, a certificate of admission to the English Grammar Schools, on the first Mondays of April and October. Other children, from seven to fourteen years of age, able to read easy prose, may be admitted on the first Monday of every month, having been first examined by the Grammar Master. In these Schools, they are allowed to remain, till the next annual exhibition, after the boys have arrived at the age of fourteen, and the girls at the age of sixteen.

"In these Schools, are taught the common branches of an English education. In the several buildings, where the arrangement is complete, there are two large halls, occupied by two Departments, one of which is a Grammar School, and the other a Writing School. The scholars are organized in two divisions. While one division attends the Grammar School, the other attends the Writing School; thus the two masters exchange scholars half-daily. In the Grammar Department, the pupils are taught, chiefly, Spelling, Reading, English Grammar, and Geography; in the Writing Department, they are taught Writing, Arithmetic, and Book-keeping." The Johnson and Winthrop Schools are each under the charge of one Master, "who is responsible for the state of his School, in all its departments."

There are two Schools, for pupils who pursue more advanced studies than are attended to in the English Grammar Schools. The English High School was instituted in 1821, for the purpose of furnishing young men, "who are not intended for a collegiate course of study, and who have enjoyed the usual advantages of the other public schools, with the means of completing a good English education." Pupils are admitted at twelve years of age, and may remain three years.

In this School, instruction is given "in the elements of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, with their application to the sciences and the arts, in Grammar, Rhetoric, and Belles Lettres, in Moral Philosophy, in History, Natural and Civil, and in the French Language. This Institution is furnished with a valuable mathematical and philosophical apparatus, for the purpose of experiment and illustration."

The Latin School was commenced in 1635. Pupils are received into it, at ten years of age, and may continue five years. They are here taught the rudiments of the Latin and Greek languages, and fully qualified for the most respectable colleges. Instruction is also given in the higher branches



of the Mathematics, and in Geography, History, Declamation, and English Composition.

The English Grammar, High, and Latin, Schools are under the care of a Committee, consisting of the Mayor, President of the Common Council, and two gentlemen elected in each Ward, making twenty-six in all. They are divided into sub-committees of three, for each of the Grammar Schools, and five each, for the Latin and English High Schools. At the annual exhibition, in August, silver medals are awarded to the six best scholars in each School. Those for the boys are called the Franklin medals, being given from a fund left for that purpose, by Dr. Franklin. The boys, to whom they are awarded, are invited to partake of the annual school-dinner in Faneuil Hall.

The sixteen Schoolhouses, for the English Grammar, Latin, and High, Schools, were erected by the city, for their accommodation, and are estimated to be worth, on an average, twenty thousand dollars each, being an aggregate of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars, equal to about one fourth of the city debt. The annual expenses of these Schools are about seventy-six thousand dollars, making the sum, annually expended by the city, for education solely, about one hundred and sixteen thousand dollars, one fourth of the annual taxes of the city. The whole amount expended for Education, in the Public and Private Schools, is not less than two hundred and twenty-four thousand dollars annually.

Thus are the means provided, at the public expense, for the gratuitous instruction of every child in the city, from the first rudiments of education, to the highest branches necessary to be known by those who do not desire a collegiate course of instruction. Indeed, the standard of education in these Schools is equal to that of many colleges in the country. There is no feature of our institutions, of which our citizens are so justly proud; none, the expenses of which are so cheerfully borne.

In addition to the Public Schools, there are in the city, one hundred and thirteen private seminaries, containing one thousand two hundred and eighty-seven boys, and two thousand and eighty-two girls, in all three thousand three hundred and sixty-nine pupils, instructed at an aggregate annual expense of one hundred and ten thousand dollars.

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#### COMMON SCHOOL SOCIETY, IN STOCKBRIDGE.

WE are glad to see, and to record, the evidence of a new interest, in behalf of Common Schools, in the town of Stockbridge, in Berkshire County. The able and talented men in that town, who are turning their own, and the attention of the community, to the subject, will soon effect a reformation. We publish, below, the '*Constitution of the Common School Society in Stockbridge*,' adopted last November. We were not aware of its existence, until we found it in a Berkshire paper of the 9th ult. How much might be done in the other towns of that County, by adopting, *and living up to*, a similar constitution! The town of Great Barrington did so, last year.

While on the subject of schools in Berkshire, we are reminded of an excellent proposition, made at the Common School Convention in that County, last August. The subject under discussion was,—what would be the most efficient way to call the attention of the public to the miserable condition of the Schoolhouses. Several measures were brought forward, none of which promised to accomplish the object, when it was proposed by the Rev. Mr. Clark, of Stockbridge, that the prudential committees of the respective districts, should call all the inhabitants together *to look at them*. This was carried by acclamation.

[From the Berkshire Courier.]

At a meeting of the friends of Common Schools, in Stockbridge, held



Tuesday, November 25, for the purpose of adopting the most efficient measures for their improvement, it was

Voted, unanimously, to form a *Common School Society*, for the town of Stockbridge.

The following Constitution was then reported by the Rev. Mr. Parker, chairman of a committee appointed at a previous meeting, and unanimously adopted :—

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMON SCHOOL SOCIETY OF STOCKBRIDGE.

Art. 1. The object of this Society shall be the improvement of the Common Schools of Stockbridge, for the Winter of 1839 and 40.

2. The Society shall be composed of such persons of both sexes, as are willing to labor for the promotion of its objects, and shall sign this constitution.

3. The officers of the Society shall be a President and Secretary.

4. There shall be a committee in each district, composed of three persons pledged to visit the schools in their respective districts, five or six times, in the course of the Winter, and report the state of the schools at a public meeting of the Society, to be held for that purpose on Monday, the 6th of January, at Curtisville, and on Monday, the 23d of March, on the Plain.

5. The report of the district committees shall embrace the number of weeks the school is to keep ; the salary of the teacher ; the whole number of scholars in the district, and their age ; the number who have attended school, and their average attendance ; the attainments of the scholars, and their progress during the Winter ; deficiencies, if any, in books and classification ; state of the schoolhouse ; interest of parents in the school ; mode of government ; what part of the expenses are defrayed by the public funds, and what part by private subscription, and whether the districts have raised money by tax, as authorized by law, for district libraries and apparatus.

6. It shall be the duty of the President and Secretary to procure an Address to be delivered at the public meetings of the Society in January, and March, and of the several district committees to cause an address to be delivered to parents, in their respective districts, as near the commencement of the Winter school, as possible.

7. The President and Secretary shall confer with the friends of Common Schools, in neighboring towns, and other places, to procure facts and information, and report to the Society.

8. The district committees shall endeavor to have the Massachusetts Common School Journal taken for the scholars of their districts, and preserved in a permanent form, for the benefit of the district and teachers.

9. The Society shall, at their meeting on the 23d of March, consider the expediency of continuing its organization and labors, for the remainder of the year.

After appointing the officers of the Society, and the several district committees, it was voted, that the proceedings of the meeting be signed by the President and Secretary, and published in the county papers.

DANIEL FAIRCHILD, *President*.

M. WARNER, *Secretary*.

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"There is no object in life, which can reasonably be desired, that honesty, self-denial, well-directed industry, and perseverance, will not place within our reach."

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A woman asked a physician whether taking snuff was not hurtful to the brain. "No," said the Doctor ; "for he that has any brains won't take snuff."

## LECTURES TO TEACHERS.

A gratuitous course of twelve lectures, before the Female teachers of the Boston schools, has just been completed. Though the lectures were open to all, yet they were specially designed to encourage and assist that most assiduous, devoted, and praiseworthy, class,—the female teachers of the city,—a class of persons, who, for a very moderate compensation, are devoting themselves to the welfare of the young, and whose daily acts are doing a thousand times more to form the character and to determine the destiny of the next generation, in this city, than all the ordinances of the city government, or the acts of the legislature.

The lectures, as a course, have been interesting, and must have been useful. They were generally well attended. The feeling of responsibility among teachers,—the first step towards improvement,—and the desire to avail themselves of all practicable means of information,—the second step,—are evidently increasing ;—so much so, that those, who are self-satisfied and content to remain where they are, must soon be content to lose their places.

Among the lectures in the course, was one by THOMAS B. WEST, Esq., of Beverly, on the use of Manuals. Parts of Mr. West's lecture are so judicious, and furnish such excellent suggestions for teachers, as to the use of text-books, that we have solicited and obtained permission to publish them. Every teacher, who will reduce these views to practice, will have taken an important step in the great art of hearing recitations.

## EXTRACTS FROM MR. WEST'S LECTURE.

I would engage your attention to some remarks that have a bearing upon the teacher's vocation. It is not easy to state the particular subject of them in a few words ; but perhaps it will be found to be—*School Manuals, and how they should be used.*

A Manual, or Text-book, we may define to be, a book which contains the rudiments, or an outline, or a full delineation, of a branch of study. It may be desirable, that one or more of the scholars should engage in that branch of study. Now, it may be presumed, that the teacher is master of this subject, and, as far as knowledge is required, might tell *rica voce*\* to his pupils as much upon the subject as it is desirable for them to attend to ; yet, with all his knowledge, he might want the skill or tact necessary to arrange the study in the best, or even in a good, manner. It is not to be expected, that a teacher should carry in his mind complete outlines, or unwritten text-works, of all the studies, in which he would employ his scholars. And even if he could, how are the scholars to gain access to the knowledge shut up in the mind of the teacher ? He must dictate to them, and they must store up what is said in their memories, or write it down upon slate or paper ; that is, they must make, each for himself, a text-book, just as it was in days of yore, when the master's dictionary was the only dictionary in school, he giving out the words, and the scholars writing them down, and defining them, as best they might. But, for obvious reasons, this would not be a good plan. And when a teacher puts a manual into the hands of his pupils, in order that they may become acquainted with a particular branch of study, we may consider him as adopting a wise expedient, by means of which they can be acquiring knowledge, when at home, away from him, or when sitting by themselves, while he is devoting his direct attention to the instruction of other scholars.

Leaving what might be, and what might not be, the fact we know is, that a teacher, in pursuing a dozen different branches of study, sometimes makes use of manuals, made by as many different authors. Each of these authors studies, or should study, the subject, in the character of a teacher ;—he should have continually before his mind the children who are to use his

\* With the living voice.—ED.

book, and the reader who is to be aided by it. He is a *School-author*, and writes, or should write, in a different style, from what he would, if he were writing for the general reader. Now, granting that a book is a good one, yet it may not be just what is wanted in this or that school, where circumstances force its adoption. There may be circumstances that require the adoption of a book, when, if the question were simply, what book is best to be adopted, considering only the advancement of the pupils, it would give place to another. Again, every thing on the part of the scholars, being favorable to the adoption of a certain text-book, the case may be, that the teacher has been accustomed to look at the subject in a different light from that, in which the author treats it; and his way may be better than that of the author; or, at any rate, he might be able to effect more, if he could initiate his pupils into the study, in the way in which he himself was initiated, or in the way in which he has been accustomed to look at it. We all know, perhaps, the greater facility with which we can read a sentence, which another has written, by altering a little the form of it, or changing, here and there, a word. And while a manual remains the same, the schools, that use it, are many and various, and alter, from time to time. A manual may be an extremely good manual for one school, a tolerably good one for a second school, and quite unfit for a third; and yet there may be strong reasons for its adoption in all these schools, or it may have been adopted, and he who observes its unfitness, in the last two schools, may be unable to effect a change, however desirable. It is not to be expected that a manual will just answer the wants of thousands of schools, each differing, in some measure, from all the rest. The writer writes for children, not for any particular collection of children, as that collection of children might not be the same, when he has finished his book, that it was when he begun. Or to use a figure. The hat-maker makes a number of hats, all of the same size and form,—or we will put it yet stronger, and suppose them all of different sizes and forms, and a number of purchasers shall come into the store, and not one find a hat that just suits him. But the artisan will, in a few minutes, with a little altering here and a little altering there, make one hat suit one head, and another hat suit another head. We ask, if the minds of different children, and the condition which they are in, differ less from each other than the size and form of their heads, and the seasons of the year. A manual may need alteration in order to be useful in the different circumstances, in which it may be adopted. The author cannot make this alteration, nor can the teacher make it in black and white, but he may make it at recitation, or he may put the scholars into a train to make it for themselves.

Again, a manual may be adopted in schools by the seaboard, in schools in or near a large city, and in schools far in the interior. It is very evident, that, though the mental faculties of the children may be the same, and their general advancement may be the same, yet their particular materials of reasoning and reflection, their simple ideas, those upon which the teacher must in some measure depend for being understood by them, and by means of which, as a fulcrum, he is to help them onward to further knowledge, are very different. The objects which the eyes perceive, and what the ears hear, the natural scenery, the modes of life, the occupations of men, the subjects of conversation, &c., are very different in these different localities. The children of these regions see indeed the same sun and sky, and run about upon the same earth, and breathe in the same atmosphere; but when we come to what constitutes the larger part of a child's intellectual wealth, how different do we find it in the children of these different regions. The boy, who in the country had been placed in a favorable situation, and had had his eyes and ears open, would find himself in a very different state of things, when he came to the seaboard; and *vice versa*.

This would lead us to consider, whether the manual we are using be fitted



to the condition of those children who have it in their hands, and whether they may not, by omitting parts, or modifying parts, or making additions, bring it nearer to what is wanted.

In order that a manual may be entirely satisfactory to a teacher, it ought to tell the scholars just what the teacher himself would tell them, if he could tell them what he ought, or might desire to. This is seldom the case. It is a very rare thing, for a teacher to find a manual that exactly suits him. And it would be strange if it were otherwise. Let any teacher think over the list of manuals that he has used, and recall the feelings which he has entertained towards them, and he will find, that, as a general rule, they have either been too hard, or too easy ; too much expanded, or too much condensed ; too deep, or too superficial ; too childish, or too advanced ; that they had too much upon this part of the subject, or too little upon that part ; in a word, they have never been just what he would have had them. This is no more than what might naturally be expected. But when the teacher is aware of a manual's not being suited to answer the wants of his scholars, and yet finds he must retain it, he should endeavor, by his own skill and knowledge, to supply the deficiency in it, and render it more fit. It should be borne in mind, that, though it may be of the first importance, if the children are young and indiscriminating, that the text-book should be, in a general sense, a good one, it may be considered an advantage, when the teacher's time is not very much taxed, that it is so difficult a thing for him to find a text-book, which just suits him,—one, which shall do all the teaching, one, which shall do not only what it ought to do, but what he ought to do, and can do better. It is well, if he feels that there is something more for him to do, than merely to see that the scholars keep along the track, which the author has marked out for them. It is well, if he feels that he must exert his own powers, draw upon his own resources, in order to make up what is wanting, and clear up what is dark, in the lesson before him. It is well, that there is something to secure to the scholars, the benefit of hearing the voice, and seeing the face, and understanding the feelings, of a living teacher, instead of being left entirely to themselves to give life to the dead words of the book-teacher. If the ability, and disposition, and opportunity, of the teacher, be, as we would have them, though we confess this is not always to be expected, then we think the teacher may be glad that the book does not do all, or does not do it in the very best manner, so that he may have a chance to say his say, to add his item of knowledge, or to draw upon the pupils' resources. Thus it is, that the unsuitableness of a manual, if it be not too great, renders it, to speak in a paradox, yet the more suitable for the great purpose.

We say, further, that the language of manuals is often unsuitable for children. The tendency seems to be, as soon as a person gets a pen in hand, to run away from the colloquial language, the children's constant and only medium of communication, to the written language, so called ;—to leave good, strong, plain, Saxon terms, those which he is inclined to stamp as vulgar, or which others have so stamped, for inferior, weaker, obscure, Latin or French terms, to the child unintelligible. As a medium of communication between mature and informed minds, we have nothing now to say against the adoption into our language of words from foreign languages, if on the whole they improve it, and enable us to say what without them we should be unable to say. We are now concerned with the language of text-books, as a medium of communication between the author and the pupils, and we think that too often this medium is obscure, and allows the meaning to shine through but dimly ;—and for this reason,—that the author forgot that he was addressing children, and allowed himself to write in the language of the learned, instead of the child's own language, nay, instead of the generally spoken English language, or so near to that as gradually to introduce the scholars into a knowledge of the written language,—that he clothed his thoughts



in a garb, that would have appeared well enough before a learned college society, but which ill suits the school-room. When we speak of the child's language, we do not mean baby's prattle, but that language, which we use when we speak to persons uneducated, as we call them, and that which may be called the child's mother-tongue. When anything is told to a child, a story by his parent, an account of a game by his playmate, this or that process described by a mechanic, or ordinary conversation listened to, about what is not too deep in itself for him to see through, the meaning, being clear and unobscured, is quickly discerned; but alter the language to the language of some text-books, and you immediately throw a veil over the meaning, or, as it were, place a vaporous medium between his mental eye and the meaning, and yet expect that eye which has ever been exercised, and still is, the greater part of the time, exercised, in seeing objects through the air, should be able to see objects as clearly through the watery medium as it did through the transparent one. But this may not be. And if the child must have this water-medium between his mental eye and the meaning, it can hardly be a matter of doubt, that, as he goes along over the surface, he will not see to the bottom; and if the author has, with much labor, spread treasures along over the bottom, which he wishes the child to have, that he will not be any better off for all the author's pains, and that these treasures will lie undisturbed, unless the child have some one to go along with him to fish them up for him. The child, when in the mother's lap, when running about home, when mingling with out-door playmates, when listening to conversation in the house, in the street, and in the workshop, between young persons or old, is learning one language, that which serves him through life for the ordinary business of life; but when he takes up the school manual, the chance is, that he finds himself addressed in a different language, which he has never learned, but which the author seems to have taken for granted will be as well understood by the child, as it was by himself. The author leaves the only language which the child has learned, the common, colloquial, English language, and takes up the learnedly written English language of the present day, made up of Saxon, Latin, French, and what not, which the child is not to be expected to understand.

There are two ways to address children, either to come down to their understanding, or to keep above them, and encourage them to exert themselves to understand what is said. Either of these ways carried to extremity may with reason be objected to. The best course is to be found in the medium between the two. The author may fail in addressing children, on the one hand, because his manner of treating the subject is too simple and childish; and on the other hand, because it requires too much mental exertion and reflection on the part of the child, or because his language does not admit of the child's seeing through it. We leave the first, unremarked upon, because it will speak loud enough for itself;—if a book be simple and childish, (which terms have a reference to the age and advancement of the children for whom it was intended, or who may use it;) there is little danger of the teacher's failing to perceive it himself, and if he does fail, it is quite probable that he will hear of it from the scholars.

We believe that the difficulty, which children experience, in understanding the words they ordinarily meet with in print, is underrated. When a person has mastered our language, to any considerable extent, it may be hard for him to estimate how difficult it is for a child to succeed in understanding what he reads, when he is continually meeting with words, the meaning of which he can neither guess, nor learn without consulting a dictionary. Even a mature mind, that has, in the course of years, studied half a score of languages, and all along his own language, may find words in a common school spelling book, of which he knows nothing, and can find out nothing, unless he goes to the public library, and consults the great quarto dictionary. The connection, where children are addressed, ought to show

what the unusual words mean, but it is not so. The scholar comes upon these words, and, according to the teacher's direction, opens his dictionary,—a school boy's dictionary, of course, and with a school boy's habits of reflection, and capacity of putting ideas together and reasoning from them,—but often the dictionary definition will give him but little help toward what he is after ; and thus, perhaps, a paragraph, or page, by its being only sparsely sprinkled with these foreign and unintelligible words, is rendered of much less value to the child, if it lose not all its value ; for these words, instead of making the meaning stronger or clearer to him, serve rather, like so many seals, to seal up what might otherwise be known. It is not hard to imagine, what must be the feelings of a scholar, who, with good resolution and mind prepared, and sitting down to make himself master of his lesson, goes along a little way, and hits upon a word that he has never seen before, or, if he has, of which he knows not the meaning, and then, after using all the helps in his possession, and making as good a meaning as he can for it, again takes up his text-book, and going along a little way further, strikes upon another of these unintelligible words, for which, partly by guessing, and partly by searching, he patches up a meaning, and then goes on, and hits upon another, and another, and is compelled to do the like with all, or go without understanding them. Now, if these words are what he ought to know, and what he is of maturity and capacity sufficient to understand easily, if he will, then nothing can with propriety be said against them, on account of the exertion required of the scholar in ascertaining their meaning. But we believe that there is a very large class, to whom it would be of but little service to understand the meaning of these words, and that they are likely to be hindered in acquiring knowledge by the intervention of these obstacles. We have supposed, too, that the scholar, who meets with these words, immediately takes down his dictionary, and searches for the meaning ; but every teacher knows, that it is not easy to get even the best scholars to be faithful in this labor, and that they will often even rest satisfied with a half idea, rather than bestow the extra labor necessary to make it whole. It is mentioned, in the memoir of Dr. Bowditch, as a thing worth mentioning, that he was careful to look out the meaning of every word about which he was doubtful. Of course, by text-books being written in this way, whatever of pleasure there might be in the scholar's learning new truths is made less. And where the young searcher in the dark paths of learning is obliged, as he goes along, to keep picking up the wick of his lamp, it is not a matter of wonder, if many a piece of gold, and of great value too, be trodden under foot and passed over unobserved, while he is trimming his lamp. It is evident enough, and easy enough to remember, that children become in due time men and women, but though equally plain, it seems harder to remember that children, when children, are not men and women ; and while there is no one who would not, on the instant, see the absurdity of trying to make the limbs of a child fill up the apparel of a full-grown person, yet we do not find it so easy to see the absurdity of trying to make the thoughts of a child fill up the literary dress of the thoughts of a mature mind, or simply to make the child endeavor to get, short-hand, the complex ideas that have cost the mature mind much time and experience.

Every thing is unknown, it may be said, before it is known ; but that would hardly reconcile us to carry off what we do not want, especially if that very burden hindered us from carrying what we really do want. If the scholar wants the knowledge, and not the language, then text-books, in the style we are speaking of, will be seen to be quite unfit. If the scholar may be benefited by learning the language, as well as the particular branch of knowledge, even then it may not be desirable for them to use such books. But if such books are in use, and may not be changed, then it comes upon the teacher, by his own direct agency, and by the agency of the scholars, as far as it can be made available, to make intelligible these obscure words.

And it is for teachers, at the time of recitation, and by some suitable mode of recitation which they may adopt, to see to it, that none of these words are slipped over, not understood, or but half-understood. It is for them to see that the scholars crack all these hard nuts, and get out the meat, and do not swallow them whole, shell and all, or it is for them, with their heavier hammer, to crack the hardest, and help them pick out the kernel. And we would repeat, that we fear it is not sufficiently noticed how difficult it is for children to understand the English language, as it is often written. If any teacher have no manual in use, to which these remarks precisely apply, yet they will not be out of place, if they lead him to discern how difficult it is for children to understand much of what they meet with in books, and which they are often supposed to understand.

#### GOVERNOR MORTON ON EDUCATION.

[We stop this number of our *Journal*, just as it is going to press, in order to present to our readers the remarks of His Excellency Governor MORTON, in his Inaugural Address, on the subject of Education. Without recommending any specific measures, it will be seen that he speaks, in terms of the highest eulogium, of the system of free schools, and enjoins upon the Legislature, the duty of directing towards the improvement of those schools their "*highest aims and efforts*." No change in the general structure of the system is intimated. It is to be presumed, therefore, that the desired improvements are to be erected upon the existing basis. Such, in our opinion, is the only wise course.]

Governor Morton commends the interests of the town and district schools, in contradistinction from the "more elevated seminaries," to the "earliest attention and most anxious deliberations" of the Legislature. Hence it will be seen, that the course, heretofore pursued by the Board of Education, (of which the Governor is now *ex officio* a member,) in behalf of the Common Schools,—and also the stand taken by this *Journal*, in earnest and unwearied advocacy of the same great cause, are now fully endorsed and ratified by the new possessor of the gubernatorial chair. When the recent Report of the Board of Education, drawn up by its late distinguished chairman, Governor Everett, shall be read, it will be seen, that, without derogating from the importance of colleges and academies, it not only maintains the paramount importance of the free schools, but recommends a measure, which will do more than any other one thing can do, for their speedy and certain advancement, that is, the establishment of a Common School Library for each of the district schools in the State.

We refer to the coincidence of views, in this particular, between the former and the present Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth, with the more pleasure, because there has not been wanting an apprehension amongst some of the friends of the cause, that with a change of men, there was to be a change of measures, on this vitally important subject. This, however, was an apprehension, in which we never, for a moment, participated. There are comparatively but few men amongst us,—there is not a patriot or well-wisher of his kind to be found in the land,—who is without a conviction of the intellect and an affectionate feeling of the heart for an institution on which the fate of so many millions of his fellow-beings is suspended. No man of any sagacity, of any foresight, can fail to see, that two vast desires now fill and dilate the hearts of the people all over the civilized world;—the desire of popular power and the desire of popular knowledge. The former of these desires will be gratified; but whether its gratification shall prove to be any thing but a curse will depend upon its being accompanied by a gratification of the latter.—*Ed.*]

#### EXTRACT FROM GOVERNOR MORTON'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

"The education of the people is a subject which has commanded so much



of the public consideration, and been so often and so ably presented to successive legislatures, that it will not fail to command your earliest attention and most anxious deliberations. Its importance in a democratic government, which must be sustained by the intelligence and virtue of the people, cannot be too highly appreciated. The system of free schools, which has been transmitted from generation to generation, has improved in its progress, and is now in a high degree of perfection. But it is capable of still further improvement. Recently, great labor has been bestowed upon, and great advancement made in, some departments of education. But the very improvements in the higher branches, and in the more elevated seminaries, excite the ambition and engross the attention of those most active in the cause of education, and thus expose the Common Schools to fall into neglect and disrepute. To arouse that strong and universal interest in them, which is so necessary to their utility and success, an interest that should pervade both parents and children, the responsibility of their management should rest upon the inhabitants of the towns. And the more immediately they are brought under the control of those for whose benefit they are established, and at whose expense they are supported, the more deep and active will be the feelings engendered in their favor, and the more certain and universal will be their beneficial agency. In the town and district meetings, those little pure democracies, where our citizens first learn the rudiments and the practical operation of free institutions, may safely and rightfully be placed the direction and the government of these invaluable seminaries. In my opinion, the main efforts and the most unceasing vigilance of the government should be directed to the encouragement of the primary schools. These are the fountains whence should flow the knowledge that should enlighten, and the virtue that should preserve, our free institutions. Let them ever be kept free and pure.

"The instruction of the common mind should be the common concern. Let the whole people be educated, and brought up to the standard of good citizens, and intelligent and moral members of society. Let the government care for those who have no one else to care for them. The poor, the weak, the depressed, and the neglected, have the greatest need of the protecting arm and the succoring hand of the Commonwealth. Let the children of such be deemed the children of the Republic, and furnished with suitable means of instruction, that their powers, mental and physical, may be developed, and they be converted into ornaments and blessings to the community. Let the town schools be open to all, and made so respectable and so useful, that all may desire to enter them. The district school, properly governed and instructed, is a nursery of democratic sentiments. It strikingly illustrates the fundamental principle of our government. There, before the pride of family or wealth, or other adventitious distinction, has taken deep root in the young heart, assemble upon a perfect level, children of all circumstances and situations of life. There they learn that rewards and honors do not depend upon accidental advantages, but upon superior diligence, good conduct, and improvement. There they have practically written upon their tender minds, too deeply to be obliterated by the after occurrences and changes of life, the great principles of equal rights, equal duties, and equal advantages.

"It is the illumination of the universal mind, that is the sure foundation of democracy. It is the elevation of every rational soul into moral and intellectual consciousness and dignity, that is to carry onward improvements in our social and civil institutions. To this end should be directed the highest aims and efforts of the legislature."